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HOW WARS ARISE IN INDIA.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MR. COBDEN'S PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

"THE ORIGIN OF THE BURMESE WAR."

BY

JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN.

LONDON:

WM. H. ALLEN & CO.,

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HOW WARS ARISE IN INDIA.

Mr. COBDEN has recently published a pamphlet entitled "How Wars are got up in India," in which he asserts that "deeds of violence and injustice have marked every step of our progress in India," and that the British authorities in the East have been always actuated by an "insatiable love of territorial aggrandisement." These heavy charges he endeavours to substantiate by a reference to our proceedings in Burmah. In the narrative which he has compiled of the "Origin of the Burmese War," he exonerates the Burmese Court and its officers from all blame, and denounces the conduct of the British Government in every stage of these proceedings as unjust, unscrupulous, and utterly indefensible; and he characterizes Lord Dalhousie's minute, written to explain and justify these transactions, as "an unstatesmanlike, immoral, and illogical production." He adds, these are "strong words, but their truth can, unfortunately, be proved by evidence as strong." The expressions are undoubtedly "strong," but any one who will give the Burmese Blue Book a calm and unbiassed perusal, will perceive that there has seldom been an instance in which strength of language has been so completely in an inverse ratio to the strength of testimony.

Those who have watched the origin and progress of these proceedings will be unable to resist a feeling of surprise, almost bordering on indignation, to find a man of Lord Dalhousie's high principle and unimpeached character, held up to the execration of the civilized world as having got up a war with a weaker power from an insatiable love of territorial aggrandisement, and defended it by an "immoral" publication. When it is borne in mind that the Blue Book affords irrefragable evidence of his extreme reluctance, from first to last, to engage in any war at all, and of his repeated declaration that "annexation would be a calamity second only to war itself," Mr. Cobden's assertion will admit of but one explanation, that all his Lordship's pacific professions were the result of hypocrisy, and that the spirit of forbearance which he manifested throughout these transactions was only assumed to conceal his ambition. From any imputation so utterly at variance with his established character, an appeal may be made with perfect confidence to those who have watched his career during the last twelve years, in the discharge of duties of the highest importance and responsibility.

Mr. Cobden states in his Preface, that he had not been able to meet with any one, in or out of Parliament, who had read the papers relative to hostilities with Burmah; and the narrative which he has drawn up is intended, therefore, as a popular history of the origin of the war, which will doubtless be received with credulity proportioned to the ignorance which prevails on the subject. Without,

in the smallest degree, questioning Mr. Cobden's innate love of truth, there can be no hesitation in stating that whatever impression his pamphlet may create, injurious to the character of the British functionaries in the East, will be attributable to the undue prominence he gives to immaterial circumstances, the omission or depression of some of the most important points in the series of events, and the general colouring diffused over the whole transaction, in accordance with his own peculiar views. It is thus that the public mind, always more ready to believe evil than good of men in eminent station, becomes warped by prejudices, which, in the case more particularly of India, are too often found to survive the generation in which they were propagated. It becomes, therefore, a matter of some importance to the cause of truth to supply an immediate antidote to the fallacious representations and reasonings contained in Mr. Cobden's publication, and to make an honest attempt to remove the odium they are calculated to create.

To go over the indictment, item by item, and to show how each circumstance has been misapprehended—I do not say misrepresented—would be no difficult task; but perhaps it will be less fatiguing and more satisfactory to the reader to be presented at once with a more faithful and accurate version of these transactions, drawn from the same source from which Mr. Cobden's narrative is derived. Such a recapitulation of these events will explain the cause of that unexampled and extraordinary unanimity which was exhibited by the Indian journals

on the Burmese question, and show the grounds on which editors, always opposed to the Government, united with its friends in commending the course which had been pursued on this occasion. After having endeavoured to vindicate the proceedings of Lord Dalhousie from the censures which have been cast on them, I propose briefly to examine how far Mr. Cobden's assertions, relative to the general progress of the British empire in India, are in accordance with historical fact.

It was at the time when Lord Dalhousie was congratulating himself on the permanence of peace, after a century of warfare, and actively engaged in providing for the extension of railways, the establishment of electric telegraphs, and a uniform rate of three-farthing postage throughout India, that an appeal was unexpectedly made to him against the extortions inflicted by the Burmese authorities on British subjects at Rangoon. Twenty-six years had elapsed since the termination of the first Burmese war, and the remembrance of the ten millions of expenditure which it entailed on the Indian treasury, had led Government, during the whole of this period, to regard a second collision with that slippery and arrogant Cabinet as an event to be above all things avoided. Subsequent to the treaty of Yandaboo, signed in 1826, the conduct of Burmese officials towards the subjects and representatives of the British Government, had been marked by that insolence by which the Burmese Court is so preëminently distinguished. The two Residents who had been deputed to Ava, in conformity

with the provisions of the treaty, had been treated with such contumely as to constrain the Government of India to withdraw the embassy altogether; and the British interests which had been established in Burmah under the guarantee of that engagement, were left without any protection. Complaints had been made from time to time of the oppression to which our merchants were subject in that country, but the Governor-General was anxious to avoid any interference which might possibly terminate in hostilities. This indifference on the part of our Government to the wrongs of its subjects naturally served to embolden the Burmese authorities, and these outrages were increased in number and aggravation. At length, the commanders of two British merchantmen, who had been subjected to the greatest oppression by the Governor of Rangoon, made an official representation of their grievances, and claimed the protection of their own Government, and it appeared impossible to refuse the demand of redress consistently with the duty which it owed to its subjects. There is no civilized Government in Europe or America which could, or would, have remained quiescent under such treatment of those whom it was bound to protect. The injury inflicted on the commanders was, after a careful examination, estimated at a sum within £1,000, and it was resolved by the Government of India to demand the payment of this amount from the Burmese authorities. Lord Dalhousie, considering the contempt with which our ambassadors had previously been treated, was unwilling to have

recourse to another political mission. He availed himself, therefore, of the presence of H.M's ships *Fox* and *Serpent*, in the Hooghly, under the command of Commodore Lambert, and deputed him to Rangoon to make the demand of reparation for the injuries inflicted on the two merchants. He was also furnished with a communication to the King of Ava, which was to be transmitted to him, in case the demand on the Governor of Rangoon was not complied with.

On the arrival of the Commodore off Rangoon, the Governor immediately interdicted all intercourse with him, and threatened to cut off the heads and to break the legs of all the foreigners, British or others, who should venture to go down to the wharf to welcome the frigate. He likewise issued orders for the ships of war to be unmoored, and take their station in the midst of the mercantile shipping; and fined the commander of a Madras vessel, a British subject, for having lowered his flag to the Commodore. Notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, an arrangement was made for an interview between him and the Governor on shore, but before it had taken place the merchants of Rangoon contrived to open a communication with the British representative, and to place in his hands a list of thirty-eight grievances, which they had suffered from the Governor of Rangoon. On the receipt of this document, the Commodore conceived it to be his duty to decline any intercourse with one whose conduct towards British subjects had been so flagitious, and to deal at once with his

master, the King. He was also led to suppose that the Governor-General, when informed of the numerous outrages which had been inflicted, might not be disposed to limit his demand of reparation to the two cases which were originally submitted to him. The Commodore, therefore, transmitted to the Governor of Rangoon, to be despatched to Ava, the letter with which he had been furnished by the Governor-General, together with a communication from himself, stating that "on his arrival at the town of Rangoon he found such an addition of cruelties to the wrongs already named, that he had no alternative but to appeal direct to the Court of Ava." Mr. Cobden considers the list of grievances presented by the merchants absurd, and he quotes the first four on the list to exhibit their absurdity. In one case a man had been unjustly fined Rs. 1,000; in another, Rs. 1,500; in a third, Rs. 5,500; and in a fourth case, flogged to death. It may appear very absurd to Mr. Cobden that men should be found so foolish as to complain of any such acts, but the Governor-General did not consider these grievances so contemptible, for he informed the Commodore that having regard to the additional long list of unwarrantable and oppressive acts committed by the Governor, and the bearing of that functionary, he had exercised a sound discretion in cutting short all discussion with the local Governor, and at once transmitting the letter of the Government of India to the King of Ava. Mr. Cobden lays great stress on what he considers the Commodore's disobedience of orders, which, after all, was only the

exercise of that discretion which an officer intrusted with duties of this nature, is always at liberty to use. But this alleged disobedience had not the slightest influence on subsequent events, nor did it in any measure occasion or accelerate hostilities, and the censure passed on it is deserving of notice, only as it affords evidence of an anxiety to turn the most trivial circumstances to the prejudice of those who were connected with the Burmese war.

The reply of the Court of Ava arrived in Rangoon on the 1st of January. It stated that the Governor of Rangoon had been recalled, and that another functionary would be sent forthwith from Ava to administer the affairs of Rangoon; and that with regard to the merchants who had been unjustifiably insulted and ill-treated, proper and strict inquiries should be made, and it should be decided according to custom. This communication was of so pacific a complexion, that the Commodore began to entertain the most sanguine hopes of the success of his mission, and stated in his letter to Government, that "*he was of opinion that the king was sincere, and that his government would fully act up to what he had promised.*" So strong was this impression on his mind,—Mr. Cobden charges him with having "got up the war,"—that in writing to Mr. Halliday, the Secretary to the Government of India, on this occasion, he said that "he was in great hopes that all would be acceded to, and that amicable arrangements would be made with the Burmese Government." The same con-

fidence of success was also expressed a third time in the letter which he addressed to the new Governor of Rangoon, in which he said that he trusted "his mission might be the means of insuring a permanent and cordial feeling of friendship between the Governments of Great Britain and Ava." Mr. Cobden has printed in large capitals the words placed, as above, in italics, and he begs the especial attention of the reader to this sentence, affirming that "the whole case as between the Governments of Burmah and India may henceforth be said to turn upon this passage." Mr. Cobden is not far from the truth in this assertion, as the question of peace and war did turn upon the sincerity of the king's pacific assurances. If the king was sincere in his desire for peace, and adopted the most obvious and effectual means of avoiding a collision, the odium of the war must rest upon us. But if it was discovered that these expressions were employed only to conceal his intentions, according to the usual tortuosity of Burmese policy, and that our reasonable demands were evaded, the war on our part was perfectly justifiable. In the former war, we had numerous opportunities of appreciating the perfection which the Burmese had attained in the arts of duplicity. To mention only one instance, the Burmese plenipotentiaries at Meeaday asked for a certain number of days for the transmission of our pacific proposal to the Cabinet at Ava, and for the reception of a reply, and then put off the General from day to day, because it had not yet arrived; yet it was

found, on the capture of the stockade, that the communication had never been sent at all. The real intentions of the Court were to be read not in any official communications, but in the conduct of its plenipotentiary. The Commodore was perfectly right in stating his belief on the 1st of January, that the king appeared to be sincere, and that there was every hope of a pacific adjustment; and he is not to be censured, when the hostile appearance of circumstances constrained him, six days after, to renounce this belief, and to act with decision.

The new Governor, the representative of the Court of Ava, deputed to Rangoon to bring the differences which existed to an amicable termination, reached the town on the 3rd of January,—the Commodore has inadvertently given the 4th as the day of his arrival. He came down accompanied by 3,000 soldiers, and a large flotilla of war-junks,—little in keeping with the pacific professions of his master. The first evidence which he gave of his peaceful disposition was to proclaim by beat of drum, and to serve a written notice on the British subjects in Rangoon, that they were not, on pain of death, to hold any intercourse with the Commodore. He remained forty-eight hours in Rangoon without taking the least notice of the British representative whom he had been sent down to conciliate and satisfy; whereas the ex-Governor of Rangoon, the truculent oppressor of British subjects, was repeatedly closeted with him, and so far from being subject to any punishment or degradation, was permitted to take his departure, with a large retinue, and all

the plunder he had amassed. On the 5th of January the Commodore sent Mr. Edwards, his interpreter, to inquire when it would be convenient for him to receive an officer with a letter on the subject of the British claims, informing him at the same time that when the matters in dispute had been adjusted, he, the Commodore, would pay his respects to him in person. The Viceroy replied that he was ready at any time to receive communications from him, and the following day was fixed for this purpose. At the same time, the non-intercourse order which the Viceroy had issued on his arrival was rescinded. On the 6th, Commander Fishbourne was sent on shore with the communication, accompanied by Captain Latter and several other officers. Before he left the vessel, Captain Latter took the precaution to send Mr. Edwards in advance to the Governor to announce their approach. A native at the gate endeavoured to prevent his entrance, and when the circumstance was stated by Mr. Edwards, the man was subjected, by order of the Viceroy, to the severest punishment. The Viceroy then informed Mr. Edwards that he wished to receive the communication through his hands, to which he replied that such a communication could not be made through a person of his subordinate rank, and that the officers intrusted with it were already on their way to his residence. When the deputation reached the outer gate, two under-officials endeavoured to stop them, but they rode into the courtyard. Instead, however, of being allowed to dismount and proceed to the antechamber, they

were kept out in the sun amidst the jeers of a rabble of menials. While they were at the foot of the stairs, the Burmese interpreter and another made their appearance, one of whom said that the Governor was asleep. Captain Latter said that if he were asleep he must be waked and informed that the Commander of one of the ships of war, bearing a letter from the Commodore, was waiting to see him. Both these men then entered the house, and soon after made their appearance again, the one repeating that the Governor was asleep and could not be waked, while the other, the interpreter, called Mr. Edwards aside and asked him to go up and speak with the Governor. This he was not permitted by Captain Latter to do. The men then entered the Governor's palace a second time, and returned again to the deputation; the one again asserted that the Governor was asleep, while the other renewed his request that Mr. Edwards would go up. When this was refused, they proposed that the letter should be sent through them, which, as a matter of course, was declined. At this juncture, a man of somewhat higher though still inferior rank passed by the deputation and entered the house. Captain Latter stopped him and remonstrated with him on the folly of this insolent proceeding, and assured him that Commander Fishbourne was next in rank to the Commodore, and that the indignity to which he was now subjected would unquestionably be resented by his own Government. But no notice was taken of the deputation, no officer of rank was deputed to meet them, nor was any communication

made to the Commander. After waiting a quarter of an hour in the sun, he rode back leisurely and reported the treatment he had experienced to his superior. It is scarcely necessary to state that the Governor was not asleep, and the only light in which it is possible to view his conduct on this occasion, is that it was a gross, intentional, and wanton insult inflicted on the officers of our Government. He had himself appointed this day to receive the communications of the Commodore, and he was fully aware that the officers to whom they were intrusted were on their way to his residence. If, in these circumstances, he turned in to sleep, it was an outrage on all decency ; if he was awake, and not ignorant of the fact that the officers of the British Government sent to wait on him had arrived, and still refused to see them, or to hold any communication with them, either in person or through the officers of his Court, it was an act of insolence, intended to show his contempt for the Government whom the officers served.

The Commodore, on being made acquainted with these events, perused again with much care the instructions he had received from the Government of India for his guidance. They stated, that " while it was the imperative duty of this Government to maintain the rights of its people, secured by solemn treaties to them, it was a duty not less imperative that Government should endeavour to obtain redress by the least violent means . . . and that, if the aspect of affairs, on the receipt of the king's reply, should be menacing, British subjects should be brought

away at once, and a blockade of the two rivers of Rangoon and Martaban established." In the judgment of the Commodore, the crisis contemplated by his own Government had arrived. The king's reply had been received. His own accredited representative, deputed to carry out his views, had arrived in Rangoon, and had treated the British officers sent to him with insufferable arrogance, and refused to receive the communication of our demands conveyed by them. The Government of India had informed the Commodore, that while it was most anxious to avoid the "terrible extremity of war, it could not tamely submit to the injury and insult it had received in the persons of its subjects," and he naturally judged that it would be still less disposed to submit tamely to the additional and aggravated insult it had now received in the persons of its own officers. He therefore issued an order for British subjects to retire from Rangoon on board the ships, and declared the ports in a state of blockade, and, in the evening, sent a boat's crew to take possession of an unfinished vessel belonging to the king, intending to hold it in pledge for the property of British subjects which had been confiscated.

The seizure of this vessel convinced the Burmese authorities that the British representative was no longer to be trifled with. The king had, for some time back, been desirous of embarking in foreign trade. The vessel containing his first adventure was stranded on Saugor Sands, and the capture of his second merchantman was likely to be visited with great severity on his servants at Rangoon. Captain

Latter therefore justly remarks that they began to tremble for their heads, and this will account for the extraordinary anxiety they manifested for the restoration of the vessel. Hitherto, all the deputations from the Burmese Government had been studiously composed of men of little or no rank, though with them forms of etiquette are substantial realities, and the omission of them is always considered an insult; but the day after the sequestration of the king's vessel, the Governor of Dalla was sent by the Governor of Rangoon to the frigate, "to see what he could do in the business." The Commodore informed him, that, in consideration of his exemplary conduct while the expedition had been lying in the river, and the great respect which was entertained for him, he, the Commodore, would deviate from his original intention, and again open communications with the Governor, on condition of his coming on board the frigate, and offering an apology for the insults which had been inflicted on the officers of the British Government. Several hours after the Governor of Dalla had left the vessel with this message, the Deputy-Governor of Rangoon came on board with a letter from his superior, stating that he was really asleep when the deputation waited on him,—a falsehood costs a Burmese official no effort,—and that he wished the Commodore to wait on him; but there was not the slightest expression of any regret for the insolence with which Commander Fishbourne had been treated. The Commodore replied that he should not deviate from the terms he had communicated through the

Governor of Dalla, and would give the Governor of Rangoon till noon of the next day to make up his mind. As the Deputy-Governor was leaving the frigate, he complained of the seizure of the king's ship, on which the Commodore said he had taken possession of it with the express intention of showing the Court of Ava, that if the arrogant proceedings of its officers were not "promptly disowned," they would inevitably be visited on those whom they represented; and he distinctly informed the Deputy-Governor, that when his demands had been complied with he would give back the ship, and salute the flag of Burmah with a royal salute. But the Governor of Rangoon, instead of making an apology, made an appeal to the Government of India. On the evening of the 8th, two inferior officers came on board, with a letter from the Governor of Rangoon to the Governor-General, stating that while he was intending to send for the Commodore, the interpreter Edwards came to acquaint him that the Commodore himself wished to have an interview with him; but being anxious to avoid any breach of the rules of etiquette, he decreed that the interpreter might come with the letter or communication; but after some time four inferior officers came in a state of intoxication, and, contrary to custom, entered the compound on horseback, and, while he was asleep, and the Deputy-Governor was waking him, used violent and abusive language; that they then went away, and conveyed an irritating message to the Commodore, who, being desirous of implicating the two countries in a war, secretly, at night, took

away the king's ship. He also stated that although the frigate had taken the ground near Dalla, yet, in consequence of the existence of a treaty of peace between the two countries, he did not re-seize the king's vessel, or molest or destroy the British officers, but "acted worthily to these unworthy men." The last message from the Governor of Rangoon appears to have been delivered on the evening of the 9th, and was simply to the effect, that if the Commodore attempted to take the vessel out of the river he would be fired upon; to which he replied, that as the Governor had appealed the dispute to the Government of India, it would be advisable "to allow matters to remain as they were," until further instructions were received from their respective Governments; but the messenger was distinctly told, that if a shot was fired by the Burmese at either of her Britannic Majesty's ships, it would be returned. The next morning, the Commodore dropped down towards the mouth of the river, to establish the blockade, with the king's ship in tow. The Burmese batteries and war-junks opened fire on the British vessels, which was returned with their accustomed promptitude and success.

Mr. Cobden asserts that the conduct of the Governor of Rangoon is now a subject of minor importance. But, throughout these transactions, which at length terminated in war, it was a matter of the highest consequence; it was the point on which the question of peace and war turned. He had come down from Ava with full powers to make

a complete and final adjustment of all matters in dispute; and it was from his conduct on this occasion, and not from any mere professions of peace by the Court, in which no confidence could be placed, that the intentions of the sovereign he represented could be determined. In his conduct there was nothing pacific, nothing even civil; it was characterized throughout by a spirit of arrogance; and if he had determined to render war inevitable, he could not have adopted surer means to that end. He brought down with him a large armament and all the munitions of war; he remained in Rangoon for more than two days without holding any communication with those whom he was sent to conciliate, but issued an order, by beat of drum, forbidding British subjects, on pain of death, to hold any intercourse with the representative of their own sovereign. When a deputation of officers was sent to him with an official communication, they were treated with the most wanton insult, and the communication was not received. When he was called on to apologize for this insult, he aggravated it by affirming that the officers were drunk. It must not be forgotten that in treating with an Asiatic Court we have a different class of feelings and habits to deal with from that which predominates in European Cabinets, and that our measures must be regulated by our own experience of its character. In Asia, there is none of that feeling of reason and moderation which gives so much confidence in European negotiations. An eastern potentate is always in the extreme of presumption or submission, according

to his own estimate of his power ; and the issue of war or peace may always be predicated from the manifest preponderance of the one feeling or the other. The behaviour of the Governor, who represented the person of his master and the views of his Court, exhibited all that Oriental insolence, which afforded the most unequivocal token of his determination rather to go to war than to make any concession. Neither was there anything in our previous intercourse with Burmese officials to afford the hope that any modification of our demand, after a premeditated insult had been offered to our officers, and all apology had been refused, would have produced any beneficial result. In the East, it has been too often found that any overstrained attempt to avoid a war has only served to render it more inevitable. In the present instance, under the circumstances of the case, any relaxation of our firmness would have been mistaken for pusillanimity, and only rendered peace the more difficult.

Mr. Cobden endeavours to justify the conduct of the Governor of Rangoon by a reference to the breach of etiquette with which our officers are charged, upon which he descants with great amplitude ; though when Lord Dalhousie alludes to the same subject, he is said to “ dwell with a minuteness quite feminine upon details respecting points of ceremonial.” In the first place, it appears to Mr. Cobden that the Commodore ought not to have sent inferior officers with his communication ; but he appears to overlook the important fact that the Commodore had informed the Governor the previous

day that he intended to send *an officer* with a statement of our claims; and that the Governor had tacitly acquiesced in the arrangement, and fixed the day for the receipt of the communications. Independently of this consideration, it was for the Commodore, who demanded reparation for the violation of a treaty, to select his own mode of communication, and not for the offending party to dictate his wishes. It would appear, however, that the Commodore did, in this case, act in exact conformity with the established usages of the country, when he deputed officers subordinate to himself to communicate with the Governor. It is stated in the Blue Book, that when a letter from the King of Ava was sent to Colonel Bogle through the Governor of Martaban, that functionary selected two officers of rank inferior only to his own ("two tseetkays with gold umbrellas") to convey it, and they were received with all honour. Of this circumstance Lord Dalhousie was not aware, when in his minute of the 12th of February he says, "admitting that there was in the deputation of these officers a neglect of strict form." In the next place, the officers were to blame for riding on horseback into the courtyard of the vice-regal residence; they should, in Mr. Cobden's opinion, have followed the rule established for Burmese officials, and humbly dismounted at the gate, and walked up on foot to the house. But the etiquette established for the subordinate functionaries of a Burmese office, were not assuredly applicable to the representatives of a foreign state, demanding redress of

grievances. They acted in exact conformity with their diplomatic character in riding up to the steps, and they would have been irretrievably degraded in the eye of every Burmese if they had submitted to the humiliating ceremony of crossing the courtyard on foot. But admitting, though only for the sake of argument, that there might have been a more strict attention to the punctilios of Burmese etiquette, this will afford no justification of the disrespect and insolence to which they were subject, and which would have been regarded as ignominious by the meanest subordinate of the Court. Mr. Cobden asserts that "the embarrassment of the Governor arose from his being called on to give audience to visitors who were not his equals in rank, and who yet could not be treated as inferiors or messengers." Then why did he not depute the Deputy-Governor to receive them and their communication? That this was the course which he ought to have pursued is most palpable from the fact, that in the representation which he gave of these transactions to his own sovereign, he stated that the Deputy-Governor did request Commander Fishbourne to deliver the letter to him, and that he refused to do so. This fact comes out incidentally in the letter addressed by the ministers at Ava to the British Government, and it has a very important bearing on the great question of etiquette, on which Mr. Cobden dwells with so much emphasis. From that document we learn that the Governor of Rangoon did not venture to inform his own sovereign of the mode in which our officers had been treated, but

falsely represented to him that they had been introduced to the Deputy-Governor, who offered to take charge of the communication. The attempt to justify the Governor's conduct by any allusion to the defect of ceremonial observances on the part of the Commodore, proves a total failure.

A very strenuous effort is made by Mr. Cobden to throw the entire blame of the war on Commodore Lambert. He says that "had his object in visiting Rangoon been to provoke hostilities, his conduct in first precipitating a quarrel and then committing an act of violence, certain to lead to a deadly collision, could not have been more ingeniously framed to promote that object." He asserts in unqualified terms that the Commodore was the person by whom the Burmese war was got up. Mr. Cobden carefully avoids all allusion to the treatment which the Commodore in the first instance, and subsequently the officers of the deputation, had received from the Burmese; and the gross insult inflicted on them is alluded to only as "an insult alleged to have been offered." But the Blue Book, which Mr. Cobden has taken as his text, affords the most pregnant evidence that during the whole period of the negotiations, and up to the moment when the Commodore heard of the indignity offered to his officers, he not only manifested no intention to provoke hostilities, but made every effort to prevent them, and exulted in every gleam of success which appeared to dawn on his pacific efforts. It was not till after the Governor had refused to receive the demand for redress that he took possession of the

king's ship; it was not till after the Burmese had opened fire upon the squadron, though he had distinctly warned them against such an act of temerity, that he demolished their fortifications.

Mr. Cobden supposes that, instead of Rangoon, the scene of these operations had been Charleston, and asks, "Can any one doubt that one unanimous cry would have been raised for the disgrace and punishment of Commodore Lambert? and why is a different standard of justice applied to the case of Burmah?" But no American functionary would have acted in the face of the civilized world as the Burmese officers acted throughout these transactions; and the comparison has not a leg to stand on. Redress was demanded of the Burmese Government for the violation of a solemn treaty, and the atrocious oppression of our merchants; and what American officers would ever have been a party to such a violation or such oppressions? The King promised reparation, and deputed a minister plenipotentiary to give full satisfaction to our representative, and from that moment the acts of the delegate become the acts of his sovereign. For two days he avoided all communication with the British authorities himself, and forbade all British subjects on shore to hold any communication with them on pain of death. Would any American plenipotentiary have acted in this fashion? When a British officer, whom he had to all intents and purposes consented to receive, waited on him with a statement of our demands, he was treated with insufferable insolence, refused an audience, and told to send in his letter by some

menial. Would any American functionary have pursued such a course? The British representative resented this treatment, blockaded the port, and, as his demand for pecuniary compensation had not been attended to, took possession of a trading vessel belonging to the Government. The Burmese viceroy, finding that he could not obtain the release of the ship except by making an apology, appealed to the Governor-General against the conduct of his envoy, as having exceeded his instructions, taking great credit to himself for having abstained from retaking the vessel, or offering any molestation to the captors. He subsequently sent a message to the Commodore, threatening to fire on him if he attempted to remove the ship. The Commodore replied that the vessel should be restored as soon as our demands were complied with, and advised him, as he had referred the matter in dispute to the Governor-General, to allow matters to remain *in statu quo*; but assured him that if a shot was fired, it would be returned. Would any American plenipotentiary, after having thus appealed to the highest authority in India, have fired upon the British ships, as they were proceeding down the river with the sequestered vessel in tow, to establish the blockade, before any reply had been received to the appeal?

Mr. Cobden charges the Governor-General with an "uncandid evasion of the real question at issue—the seizure of the king's ship." But this vessel was seized because British subjects had been plundered, and the demand for reparation had not been complied with, and the officers sent with the demand

had been treated with the grossest indignity. To affirm that the seizure of the vessel was the real question at issue, is to inverse the relation of cause and effect. But the war did not arise from the sequestration of this vessel, or even from the destruction of the Burmese stockades, after they had opened fire on our ships. From the 6th of January, when the vessel was taken in pledge for the reparation which had been refused, to the 10th of February, when it was resolved to make a military demonstration in Burmah, the war might have been avoided by a suitable apology. Notwithstanding the strong provocation which the British Government had received, it was resolved to make another vigorous effort to avert the calamity of war. In reply to the letter of the Governor of Rangoon, charging Commander Fishbourne and the officers who accompanied him with having been intoxicated, a conciliatory but firm communication was made to him, in which the various hostile measures which had been pursued against us were recapitulated, but no fresh demand was made in consequence of the recent insult,—beyond those previously advanced, and which the Burmese had virtually agreed to,—but one, that the Governor of Rangoon should express to the Government of India, in writing, his deep regret that Commander Fishbourne should have been treated with disrespect, and exposed to public insult at his own residence on the 6th of January. After this apology had been made, the Government of India would depute an officer of rank to adjust a final settlement, and release the king's ship, when entire con-

cord would be restored. That the demand thus made was eminently reasonable, cannot be questioned for a moment. It was that which no government with any regard for its own character and position, or for the honor of its officers, could have neglected to make, and it inflicted no indignity on the Burmese Governor. But he mistook the moderation of our tone for weakness, and evaded compliance with our request. In his reply he abstained from any expression of regret for the insults which had been inflicted on our officers, but required that they should be superseded in their functions by their own Government, and that another officer of rank should be appointed to conduct the negotiations. To have acceded to this request would have been an act of the greatest injustice to the Commodore, and it would only have been followed by other and more insolent demands. On the receipt of this letter, it appeared to the Governor-General that the resources of negotiation had been exhausted, and that no other alternative was left but to obtain the reparation which had been refused by a demonstration of our military power. The war is therefore to be unequivocally attributed to the Burmese authorities, who refused the easiest terms on which an aggrieved and powerful Government has ever offered to renew the relations of amity. The cause of hostilities is very distinctly traced in the able state paper drawn up on this occasion by Lord Dalhousie, which is worthy the particular attention of any one who may be desirous of learning the literal truth in reference to these

transactions:—"The conduct of the Governor of Rangoon towards the British officers, on the 6th of January, would have been felt as ignominious by the lowest subordinate at his Durbar, if he had himself been subject to it. The ignominy inflicted on these officers, if it be not resented, will be, and must be, regarded as the humiliation of the power they serve. The insult has been persisted in to the last. . . . Were all this to be passed over, and friendly relations renewed, the ground thus gained by the Burmese would be fully taken advantage of. The oppressions and exactions to which British subjects at Rangoon have been exposed would be redoubled; the impracticable discourtesies which have been the steady policy of the Government of Ava since the conclusion of the Treaty of 1826, and which have driven away one British envoy after another from Ava, and subsequently from Rangoon (till for many years past there has been no Representative of this Government in Burmah at all), would be habitually practised towards the Agent who may be placed at Rangoon; and, within a very brief period of time, the Government of India would be reduced to the same alternative which it has now before it, of either abandoning its subjects, and acknowledging its inability to protect them, or of engaging in a war. . . . The British power in India cannot safely afford to exhibit even a temporary appearance of inferiority. Whilst I should be reluctant to believe that our empire in India has no stay but the sword alone, it is vain to doubt that our hold must mainly rest upon the might of the conqueror,

and must be maintained by that power. The Government of India cannot, consistently with its own safety, appear for one day in an attitude of inferiority; or hope to maintain peace and submission among the numberless princes and people embraced within the vast circuit of the empire, if for one day it give countenance to a doubt of the absolute superiority of its arms, and of its continued resolution to assert it."

To Mr. Cobden, Lord Dalhousie's argument may appear unstatesmanlike, immoral, and illogical, but such are the principles of policy which it has been found necessary to adopt in India, and it is upon this basis that our singular empire rests. As soon as a doubt has been diffused among the various princes and tribes we hold in subjection, of the absolute superiority of our arms, and of our continued resolution to assert it, our dominion will begin to totter, and soon cease to exist. Be that as it may, one fact is evident from this brief Review of the events which led to the Burmese war, and the grounds on which it was undertaken, that it did not originate in that "insatiable love of territorial aggrandizement" which Mr. Cobden charges on the Indian Government.

This assertion is equally as inapplicable to the general progress of our dominion in India, as to the recent acquisition of Pegu; neither is it in accordance with the fact,—as Mr. Cobden affirms,—that "public opinion in England has not hitherto been opposed to an extension of our dominion in the East; on the contrary, it is believed to

be profitable to the nation." It cannot be denied that Parliament has in every instance voted public thanks to the brave armies which have supported the national honour in the East, and to the eminent statesmen who have directed their movements. It could not have done less. To have withheld the accustomed reward of national gratitude from our officers, whether civil or military, who had performed great public services, simply because the scene of their labours lay in the East, would have been to create an invidious and unjust distinction. But the most cursory reference to the history of British India will demonstrate that the empire has grown to its present magnitude, not in accordance with, but in direct opposition to, the wishes of Parliament, of the Ministry, and of the Court of Directors, and not less of the Governors-General themselves, who have been instrumental in augmenting it. It will incontrovertibly establish this remarkable fact, that the most ambitious conquerors have not made more strenuous efforts to enlarge their territories, than the public authorities in England and India have made to prevent the increase of their territories. Such a retrospect, though tedious, may not be without its use at a time when influential members of Parliament deem it their duty to ascribe the establishment of a great empire in the East to an insatiable love of territorial aggrandizement, and to stigmatize the means by which it has been established as involving "deeds of violence, fraud, and injustice." It may also serve in some measure to enlighten the minds of those who have hitherto paid little at-

tention to the subject, and are therefore liable to be carried away by such confident and unscrupulous denunciations.

Clive, the founder of the British empire in the East, after the capture of Chandernagore in March, 1757, having discovered the intrigues of the Nabob of Moorshedabad, and being fully aware of his rancorous feelings towards those who had wrested Calcutta from his grasp, and driven him back to his own capital, pronounced the memorable expression, "We cannot stop here." Within three months after this declaration, he was constrained to make war on the Nabob. The victory of Plassy broke the Mahomedan power in Bengal, and placed the soubahs of Bengal and Behar at our disposal. On his second visit to India as Governor of Bengal, Clive obtained a grant of these two principalities from the powerless successor of the Great Mogul, and immediately made up his mind to "stop" there, and for ever to limit the British dominions in India to these possessions. His sentiments were conveyed in this remarkable language :—" My resolution was, and my hopes will always be, to confine our assistance, our conquests, and our possessions to Bengal, Behar, and Orissa."—Orissa, as then understood, comprised only one Bengal district on the extreme south.—"To go further is, in my opinion, a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd, that no Governor and Council in their senses can ever adopt it, unless the whole scheme of the Company's interest be first new modelled." Having firmly and conscientiously adopted this principle,

and resolved to avoid all increase of territory, he gave back the province of Oude, which had fallen to us by right of conquest. In these moderate views, the Court of Directors most cordially participated, and considered it a sacred duty to limit their views to the possession and government of these provinces. Warren Hastings, who had been trained up in the school of Clive, adopted the same opinion, and during the twelve years in which he remained at the head of affairs, the province of Benares was the only addition made to our dominions, and this was effected in direct opposition to his wishes, by a resolution of the Supreme Council, under the dictation of Mr. Francis. But he soon found, that in order to protect our settlements and territories in India, and to maintain the position we had attained, it was indispensably necessary to curb the ambition, and prevent the encroachments of the native powers. He was thus drawn into the vortex of "country politics," as they were then designated, and obliged to engage in military operations at Poonah, at Gwalior, and in the neighbourhood of Madras. These expeditions added nothing to our dominions, but they taught the princes of India to regard us as the first and most important military power in the country, always ready and able to enforce our superiority. The efforts which were thus made to maintain a supremacy which had become necessary not only to our political but also to our commercial interests, exhausted the treasury, and created the most violent prejudice against Mr. Hastings; in England he was denounced as

an ambitious despot, "anxious to rival the fame of Tamerlane and Aurungzebe;" and it was determined to withdraw from all political associations and military expeditions beyond the limits of Bengal and Behar, and shut ourselves up within the narrow shell of these provinces. On the 9th of April, 1782, the House of Commons resolved that "the orders of the Court of Directors, which have conveyed to their servants abroad a prohibitory condemnation of all schemes of conquest and enlargement of dominion, by prescribing certain rules and boundaries for the operation of their military force, and enjoining a strict adherence to a system of defence upon the principle of the treaty of Allahabad, were founded no less in wisdom and policy than in justice and moderation." In the India Bill of 1784, which expressed the views of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, the same doctrine was embodied in this emphatic language, "to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of the nation." What terms could more clearly exhibit the national determination to resist the expansion of our territories with the whole weight of Parliamentary authority, and to confine our possessions to the two provinces which we had then held for twenty-seven years? But it was not within the power of Parliament to circumscribe our Indian Empire. The native princes permitted us to pursue this pacific policy for six years, at the end of which period Tippoo Sultan, who had inherited from his father "a powerful empire, and an

army of 300,000 men," as well as his insatiable ambition, attacked our ally, the Rajah of Travancore, whom we were bound by treaty to protect. Lord Cornwallis demanded an explanation, which was haughtily refused, on which he declared war against the Sultan, and defeated him; and, with a view to the future peace of the Deccan, deemed it advisable to reduce his resources by depriving him of half his dominions, which were divided between the Company and their allies. The House of Commons, notwithstanding thirteen resolutions moved by Mr. Francis, in condemnation of these transactions, declared by a large majority that the war was founded in policy and justice, and the thanks of both Houses were voted to the Governor-General; but, as if to prevent a misconception of the vote, and its being construed as a relinquishment of the pacific policy enunciated in the resolution of the House, eleven years before, the clause of the Act of 1782, against "extension of dominion in India," was repeated in the Bill which renewed the Charter in 1793. Then followed five years more of tranquillity; but Lord Wellesley, on his arrival in India, in 1798, found that Tippoo Sultan had formed an alliance with the French at the time when Bonaparte was in Egypt, and that he had been making the most extensive preparations for assailing us, with the determination, if possible, to drive us from the soil of India. A second Mysore war therefore became inevitable, and it ended in the destruction of the throne and dynasty of Tippoo, and the absorption of his dominions. The hostility

of the Mahratta powers against us was again developed, and we were brought successively into collision with Holkar, Scindia, the Rajah of Nagpore, and other chiefs. Victory again attended our standard, new territories were added to the empire, and its dimensions were doubled during the administration of Lord Wellesley. On his return to England an effort was made to impeach him, in that "he, actuated by unjustifiable ambition and the love of power, had formed schemes of aggrandisement and acquisition of territory in direct opposition to the established policy of the East-India Company;" but it was supported only by a feeble minority, and the attempt proved abortive. Parliament appreciated the services of a great statesman, who, in the midst of unexampled difficulties, had preserved, enlarged, and consolidated the empire, and refused to inflict a sentence of condemnation on him. On the other hand, the Court of Directors sighed over the increase of our dominion, and gave vent to their feelings of chagrin in the following strain:—"The territories we have recently acquired under those treaties, under others of a similar kind, and by conquest, are of so vast and extensive a nature, that we cannot take a view of our situation without being seriously impressed with the wisdom and necessity of that solemn declaration of the Legislature, that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are repugnant to the wish, the honour, and the policy of the nation.'"

Among the most energetic assailants of Lord Wellesley's Indian policy was the Earl of Moira,

who denounced his proceedings as unjust and indefensible, and deplored the extension of our territories, which had resulted from them. Six years after, he was placed in a position the best adapted for estimating the justice and equity of this censure: he was appointed Governor-General. On his arrival in India, he found that a war with Nepaul, owing to the presumptuous demands and the encroachments of that Court, could no longer be avoided. The war ended in a new accession of territory. Scarcely had the sword been sheathed than he found it necessary to take the field against the Pindarrees, the organized freebooters of India, whose annual ravages, now extended over a thousand miles of territory, had spread dismay and desolation along the line of our frontier from Agra to Ganjam. It was found that they were abetted by all the Mahratta powers, who had, moreover, formed a secret combination to uproot us during a period of profound peace. The Governor-General took the field in person, with an army of 90,000 men, the largest we had ever assembled, extinguished the Pindarrees, broke the Mahratta power beyond the chance of recovery, and made so magnificent an addition to our territories, that he who, as Lord Moira, had reprobated the ambition of Lord Wellesley, as Marquis of Hastings,—to which dignity he had been raised,—announced that the Indus was in future to be regarded as the boundary of our Eastern Empire. He was succeeded by Lord Amherst, the very personification of a mild and pacific policy; but during his incumbency, the

aggressions of the Burmese drew us into a long and expensive war, which terminated in the annexation of new provinces. Then came Lord William Bentinck, whose boast it was to have restored the sword to its scabbard, and placed the army on a peace establishment ; but he was obliged, in mercy to an oppressed people, to depose the Rajah of Coorg and absorb that small principality ; and even his conduct has not escaped the censure of those who affirm that deeds of violence and injustice have marked our progress in the East. Lord Auckland, mild and peace-loving almost to a fault, found the intrigues of Russia pushed up to the neighbourhood of the Indus, and he felt the necessity of establishing British influence in the regions beyond that river. The expedition into Affghanistan led to no immediate acquisition of territory, but the calamity in which it terminated laid the foundation of new wars and conquests. Lord Ellenborough went out to India with the most pacific intentions. He publicly announced his determination “to restore tranquillity to both banks of the Indus, to give peace to Asia, to create a surplus revenue, and to emulate the magnificent benevolence of the Mahomedan emperors in the great works of public utility.” But he soon found that the Government of India could not consistently with its own safety appear for one day in an attitude of inferiority, or hope to maintain peace and submission among the numberless princes and people embraced within the vast circuit of the empire, if for one day it gave countenance to a doubt of the absolute superiority of its arms, and of

its continued resolution to maintain it. The unexampled disgrace of our arms, and the extinction of an entire army in the passes of Affghanistan, had spread this feeling of doubt to a dangerous extent through India, and, after a short struggle between the pacific promises he had made at the London Tavern and the exigences of his new position, Lord Ellenborough yielded to necessity, and sent an army of retribution into Affghanistan to restore the prestige of our power. During the twenty-seven months of his administration, the territory of Scinde was absorbed, and the independence of Scindia finally and irretrievably extinguished. Lord Ellenborough's policy was reprobated in England, and more particularly at the India House, and his successor was expected to reverse it. Lord Hardinge, therefore, went out to India with the firmest resolution to avoid war with any prince or potentate, even under the most threatening aspect of circumstances, and he maintained his resolution to the latest moment of safety. An armed force of sixty thousand Sikhs crossed the Sutlej and burst upon our provinces, to satiate their appetite for plunder with the spoils of our fairest districts. Four great battles were fought before we could drive this host back into the Punjab. The kingdom of Runjeet Sing was dismembered, and two new provinces were added to our empire, and Lord Hardinge returned to England in less than four years, bequeathing to his successor the assurance that it would not be necessary to fire another shot for seven years. But before Lord Dalhousie had been three months in India, the

flames of revolt burst forth at Mooltan, and in a few months the whole of the Punjab was up in arms against us, and it became necessary for our own safety to extinguish the Sikh power altogether, and to extend our dominions to Peshawur. With the humiliation of our last and most formidable opponent in India, it appeared, even to the least sanguine, that war had at length ceased, and that the energies of Government might in future be devoted exclusively to the pursuits of peace. In the midst of these agreeable anticipations, Lord Dalhousie was suddenly summoned to Calcutta, to meet a new crisis which had arisen in Burmah. He posted in haste to the metropolis, with the determination to avoid hostilities, and, if they were inevitable, still to avoid annexation. Before the close of the year, however, the province of Pegu had been conquered, and incorporated with our possessions. This rapid review of the growth of our power in India will be sufficient to disprove the assertion, that it has been owing to "our insatiable love of territorial aggrandisement." At every stage of our progress, territorial acquisition has been submitted to as the least of two evils. Exposed to the incessant machinations and hostilities of the princes of India, to whom war was more natural than peace, we have found it necessary successively to deprive them of power, as the only chance of avoiding interminable warfare. From the period when Lord Clive declared that no governor in his senses would ever think of extending our conquests and possessions beyond Bengal and Behar, to the time when Lord

Dalhousie affirmed that the annexation of any portion of Burmah would be a calamity second only to that of war, there is no instance in which a war can justly and fairly be traced to motives of ambition. That great dominion has been thrust upon us. The same event has happened to all our Indian rulers; and even the most timid and pacific have found themselves, on assuming the responsibilities of government, forced into hostilities by the irresistible current of circumstances. We have been involuntarily led, step by step, to the pinnacle of empire, impelled by influences beyond our control, pursuing a policy we always disapproved of, and fulfilling a destiny against which we were perpetually struggling.

This unexampled growth of a mighty empire, the increase of which, during the long period of ninety years, has never for a moment been checked by the resolutions of Parliament or the mandates of the Court of Directors, by the opposition of the Ministry or the denunciations of patriots, or even by the pacific determination of the Governors-General themselves, has driven many reflecting minds to conclude that it follows some law of progression, which it is idle to think of resisting. Strange to say, this sentiment has been mistaken for fatalism. Mr. Cobden says, that the "pretence of destiny is not to be tolerated as a plea among Christians, however valid it may be in Mahomedan casuistry." No one will for a moment question the truth of this observation. That which might appear perfectly congruous in the address of a conqueror like Tamer-

lane, would be utterly inconsistent from the pen of a Christian ruler. But what Governor-General has ever adopted such a sentiment, or endeavoured to palliate ambition by "the pretence of destiny?" The only statesman who appears to have made use of the word "destiny" is Lord Dalhousie, and if Mr. Cobden had quoted the whole of the sentence in which it occurs, the reader would have perceived how little ground there was for the sneer in which he indulges. In his minute of the 3rd of November, his Lordship says, "But if, after all, peace cannot be procured by anything short of the conquest of Burmah; if the lapse of time and the course of events shall establish a real necessity for advance, then let us advance—let us fulfil the destiny which there, as elsewhere, will have compelled us forward, in spite of our wishes, and let us reconcile ourselves to a course which will then have no alternative. Having made every honest attempt to stand fast, we shall go on with a clear conscience, with motives unimpeached, and we may rest tranquil as to the ultimate result." But it was not till after he had made the most strenuous effort first to avoid a war, —in which he had failed,—and then to resist the annexation of any portion of the country, that he was led almost irresistibly to adopt the expression "let us fulfil the destiny which here, as elsewhere, will have compelled us forward, in spite of ourselves." To confound the word, in the connection in which it is used, with the fatalism of the Mahomedan, is both unjust and ungenerous. But while every Christian will repudiate the doctrine of Destiny, he will

not be ashamed to acknowledge the existence of an over-ruling Providence, which disposes of the destinies of nations. It is scarcely possible to contemplate the mysterious growth of our power in the East, without yielding to the conviction that it is to be attributed to the dispensation of a Higher power ; and it would be an act of weakness to allow ourselves to be moved from this conclusion by any morbid dread of being charged with the presumption of making Providence a party to what are designated our "crimes." In thus acknowledging the intervention of Providence in the progress of events in India during the last hundred years, we recognise in it the application of a most effectual remedy to the anarchy and misery which had so long desolated it. The extinction of a hundred petty and ruthless despotisms, and the establishment in their stead of one great, predominating, and irresistible power, by which the country is preserved from the intestine violence and oppression and the external invasions which formed the sum of Indian history for a century before our advent, is an incalculable blessing to India ; and England was the only nation equal to such a mission, and capable, through the stability of its own institutions at home, of giving permanence to the institutions of peace and order abroad.

The empire of India is not, as Mr. Cobden appears to suppose, an "imperial crime," to be expiated by "atonement and reparation," but an imperial trust, to be fulfilled with Christian fidelity and zeal ; and this sense of our national responsibility in the East, will be deepened in proportion as we recognise the

hand of Providence in the growth of that empire. Nor must it be forgotten that during the period in which our dominions in India have been augmented, the ability of England to bestow on them the blessing of good government, has been enlarged in a proportionate degree. It is an unquestionable fact that the mistakes of one administration have been conscientiously corrected, as far as possible, by that which succeeded it. The science of Oriental government has been progressively matured by experience, and the provisions made for the management of each successive acquisition have exhibited a marked improvement on previous arrangements. Defective as the system of Warren Hastings appears in our eyes, it was more efficient and advantageous than that which was established in the days of Clive. Lord Cornwallis's institutions were a great improvement on those of Hastings, but they will stand no comparison with those of Lord William Bentinck's administration; and the internal organization of the government under Lord Dalhousie is greatly superior in vigour and efficiency even to that of Lord W. Bentinck. More liberal and enlightened views have gradually acquired the ascendant, and the principles which are now applied to the administration in India are immeasurably in advance of those which prevailed seventy or eighty years ago. Public opinion in England has been improved and invigorated, and is brought to bear on India with increasing force and effect. The administrative improvements which are devised in England, from time to time, are immediately transferred to India,

and the benefit of its annexation to a great, free, and ever-advancing country is constantly becoming more apparent. During the discussions which took place on the India Bills of Fox and Pitt, there was not the remotest allusion made to the necessity of bestowing any intellectual culture on the natives of the country, or endeavouring to raise the national character by education and civilization. To the greatest minds of that age, such efforts appeared to form no part of our duty. On the contrary, there were not a few men of note and influence in the Indian administration at home who repudiated the idea of imparting instruction, either secular or divine, to the natives of the country, on the ground that it was incompatible with the continuance of our rule. It is a matter of just exultation to contrast the more elevated sentiments developed in the debates of 1853 with the narrow and contracted views exhibited in those of 1783. It is an indication of our increasing fitness for the Government of India, that it was equally recognised on both sides of the House to be the sacred duty of England to bestow on it that form of government and those institutions which were best adapted to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of its inhabitants, as well as their social and material comfort, and to elevate India in the scale of nations. The difference between the Ministry and its opponents during these discussions appears to have been, not on first principles, but on the most suitable and efficient mode of carrying them out.

Fears have been expressed, not only by those

who are habitually opposed to the Indian Government, but even by some of its most sincere friends, that our empire in the East has become less secure the more it has been enlarged. A view of the map of British India, with the red line of appropriation extended in every successive edition of it, and of the vast compass of our territories, stretching from Cashmere to Cape Comorin, and from the confines of Belochistan to the borders of Siam, and of the various tribes and nations, sects and languages, comprised within this circle, is calculated to oppress the mind with a feeling of awe, not unminged with apprehension. Every fresh addition of territory appears to be a new element of weakness; and the prophecy of Captain Trant in 1826, when we had just taken possession of the provinces of Tenasserim, Aracan, and Assam, seems to approach its fulfilment: "In this manner British India will continue accumulating, until at last the enormous fabric falls with a sudden crash." But sixty years before, the same feeling of alarm was expressed by Zephaniah Holwell, one of the survivors of the Black Hole, upon the first extension of our power to the two provinces of Bengal and Behar:—"Thus we shall go on grasping and expanding until we cram our hands so full that they become cramped and benumbed, and we shall be obliged to quit and relinquish even that part which we might have held fast, if bounds had been set to our progress, which, upon the present system we now see is impossible; therefore a total change in our politics becomes indisputably necessary." These apprehensions com-

menced with the first establishment of our political power, and they have been revived with every extension of it. It would be an act of presumption to assume that our dominion in India is beyond the contingencies and mutations to which all human possessions are liable ; but we must not overlook the considerations which are calculated to inspire confidence. The means of holding the empire in security have been increased to a greater extent than the empire itself. The military resources and appliances of Government have been indefinitely augmented, while, at the same time, the means, and even the hope, of resistance on the part of the natives has been diminished in a corresponding degree. Many provinces which, when first occupied by us, required the presence of an army to keep down revolt, have long since come to a cheerful acquiescence in our rule, and a battalion or two are more than sufficient to maintain our authority in them. The martial population has subsided into a peaceful peasantry, and the prophecy appears to have attained its literal fulfilment, that men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. In our oldest provinces, with the exception of the troops at Barrackpore, which guard the capital, and at Dinapore, which are required to watch Nepal, there are not more than 8,000 soldiers to support our authority among 35,000,000 of people. We govern the whole of India with more ease and confidence than we formerly governed the separate divisions of it, surrounded as they were by jealous and rival potentates. We have disarmed

India and broken up its military organizations ; and even the greatest alarmist will not hesitate to confess that there is not, at present, the slightest probability of any hostile combination in the provinces accustomed to our rule, which 5,000 troops, with a suitable complement of artillery, would not at any time be sufficient to extinguish. The vast army of between 200,000 and 300,000 men which the Government maintains, is rendered necessary, not so much by the strength of opposition it is intended to cope with, as by the extent of country which it is required to occupy, and the absence of all means of rapid communication, and of sudden concentration.

The same remark will hold good with regard to external invasion ; the extension of our authority over the whole of India places us in the most advantageous position for meeting and repelling any inroad which may be made from abroad. In his masterly minute on Indian Railways of the 20th of April last, Lord Dalhousie states that "the points on which hostile attacks are the most probable are the Cabul frontier and the borders of Nepal." The least danger, however, is on the side of Nepal, the greatest from that of Cabul. "The probability," says his Lordship, "of an attack from Cabul under European instigation, if circumstances should arise elsewhere to recommend it.....is by no means to be disregarded." This probability has become more proximate within the last six months ; Europe appears to be on the eve of a general war, in which Russia and England will be found on

opposite sides. Meanwhile, it is announced in the continental journals that the Russian general Perowsky has stormed the fortress of Ahmetzet, and that the road to Khiva is open to him. It is also stated that the Persians have at length captured Herat. These two events exhibit the recent and rapid progress of Russian influence in Central Asia, to counteract which we marched across the Indus, fifteen years ago, and encountered the perils of an Affghan campaign. At that period, Russia had despatched an army towards Khiva, and issued a manifesto announcing that the expedition was intended not only to chastise the Khan for reducing the subjects of Russia to slavery, but to establish that political influence in Central Asia which legitimately belonged to that power. The expedition to Khiva failed, and the allies of the Russians, the Persians, were driven back from Herat. But Russia always advances and never recedes. Her object is apparently attained, and the various chiefs and people of Central Asia will now be placed in a state of complete subordination to her paramount and undisturbed influence. Henceforth, whenever our differences with Russia may assume a dangerous character, the simplest and most effectual mode of annoying us will be to instigate the various tribes of that region to cross the Indus, as their forefathers have been in the habit of doing during a period of more than eight centuries, and pour the tide of invasion on the provinces of India, their hereditary prey. A little Russian gold and a few Russian officers to direct the movements of these

hordes, will be all that the Emperor will be required to contribute to an expedition which must subject us to the most serious embarrassment and expense. Few of those who may thus cross the Indus will probably be able to return home, still, the irruption of fifty or sixty thousand Mahomedan crusaders will tax the resources of British India in no ordinary degree. In the event of any such occurrence, it will be found that the security of our position within the Indus has been very greatly improved by the subversion of the independence of Scinde, Gwalior, and the Punjab, the extinction of their armies, exceeding a hundred thousand brave soldiers, and the transfer of more than seven hundred pieces of cannon from their arsenals to our own. If those courts had remained independent, they would, in case of an invasion, have become the scene of hostile intrigue and the source of great anxiety; and there can, therefore, be no hesitation in affirming, in reference to any contingencies which may arise to the west of the Indus, that the extension of our empire to that river, and the annihilation of all native sovereignty within it, has contributed to the strength, and not to the weakness, of the empire.

It must not, moreover, be overlooked how greatly the improvement of the means of communication by which the present age is so eminently distinguished, has increased, and is increasing, the means of political security in India. Government is now engaged in laying down various lines of electric telegraph to the extent of three thousand miles,

which will enable the Governor-General, in whatever part of the country he may happen to be, to receive and reply to all communications between sunrise and sunset. Intelligence of any dangerous commotion will be made to him, and the orders he may issue on the occasion will reach their destination, however remote it may be, within twelve hours. It would be impossible to overrate the importance of these telegraphic lines in India, by which a degree of ubiquity will be given to the supreme authority in territories as extensive as the whole of Europe. There can be little doubt that if Government had enjoyed the advantage of an electric telegraph on the 10th of February, 1852, when it was resolved to make a military movement upon Burmah, and due notice of that resolution could have been communicated on that same day to Bombay and Madras, the expedition would have been enabled to reach Rangoon a month earlier, and we might have dictated a peace at the capital to the astonished Court before the rains were half over. The Court of Directors have also applied themselves to the immediate establishment of railways in India, with a degree of alacrity and energy which reflects the highest credit on them. In no country will the effect of railroads be more beneficial than in India ; and however great may be the social, commercial, and intellectual advantages to be derived from them, it is in the additional strength and confidence they will impart to the Government that their value will be particularly conspicuous. By the appliances of the rail and the telegraph, our hold on India will

become so firm, that the idea of any native power being able for a moment to put our supremacy in peril, appears in the light of a simple absurdity. What would be the chance of success in any revolt, when the first movement of sedition, wherever it may occur, would be communicated to the headquarters of Government with the speed of lightning, and an overwhelming force would be concentrated on the point of danger, with a degree of celerity, which, to the natives, must appear superhuman? One of the ablest of the public officers who have administered the affairs of India, remarks in a recent work on the first Burmese war, that "it must in candour be acknowledged that, in the present day, many able and highly-instructed men make light of the perils of territorial extension;" and well they may, when they find that the telegraph, which is said to annihilate time, and the rail, which annihilates distance, are about to be established in India, and that our troops and the munitions of war will hereafter be moved at the rate of 500 miles a day? With the aid of these agencies, months will be reduced to days, and Lahore will be fivefold nearer to Calcutta than Patna was in the days of Lord Clive. Well may we make light of the perils of territorial expansion, when we find the Governor-General stating the fact that "when the railway in Egypt is completed from Alexandria to Suez, and a railway shall be formed from Bombay to Upper India, a regiment may be conveyed from England to its station in the North-West Provinces in less time

and with less trouble than it could now march from Calcutta to Benares ;”—when, in short, we may obtain troops from England as speedily as we now do from a distant cantonment. It is this prospect of the establishment, at so early a period, of these means of rapid communication between one part of India and another, combined with the shortening of the distance between India and England, which imparts so much confidence, and enables us to regard the growth of the empire without any feeling of dismay. In the midst of the most arduous and extensive military operations, and when the designs of the French in Egypt increased our embarrassment, Lord Wellesley complained that he had been *seven* months without a single communication from England, and was utterly ignorant of the position of circumstances beyond the limits of India. At the present time, information is transmitted every fortnight between London and Calcutta in five weeks. When the telegraphs in Egypt and in India have been completed, the interval of time will be reduced to three weeks ; and he must have an unaccountable mistrust of the progress of modern science who will venture to assert that before the expiration of ten years, the London papers may not be expected to give us every morning a report of the events of the preceding day, transmitted through means of the telegraph, from Peshawur, from Calcutta, from Prome, and Madras, and Bombay.

When to these material elements of security we add the moral guarantee of the most honest and vigorous efforts to improve the institutions we have

bestowed on India, to improve the social, intellectual, and religious condition of its inhabitants, and to raise them to an equality with ourselves, there appears little reason to regard the increasing magnitude of our empire with any degree of alarm. If our benevolent exertions are multiplied in proportion to our responsibilities, the increase of the British possessions in the East will be synonymous with the extension of tranquillity, civilization, and true religion. If it be the intention of Divine Providence, as it would appear to be, that the nations of the East shall receive these blessings through the instrumentality of England, we have only to pursue our vocation with untiring zeal, and we may leave the issue of events to the great Disposer of human affairs. The late Sir Charles Metcalfe was in the habit of remarking, that as the empire came in a day, so it might be expected to pass away in a night, and that we might wake some morning and find India lost. He happened to repeat this remark one day to the late Dr. Marshman, who instantly observed: "Not unless we go to sleep over our duties. We are immortal in India till our work is done, and we have a century at least of labour before us." It is in this spirit of confidence, inspired by a sense of our high vocation, and not in trembling anxiety regarding the punishment of our "crimes," as Mr. Cobden designates our proceedings, that we are to pursue our career in India.

The question whether India is likely at any future period to shake off the dominion of England, is gradually becoming more and more linked with

the broader question whether Asia will be able henceforth successfully to resist the increasing ascendancy of the European, and, more particularly, of the Anglo-Saxon, family. The one is evidently becoming more vigorous and powerful, the other more feeble; and the matchless improvements of steam navigation tend every year to bring the strong nearer to the weak. The transfer of authority which has taken place in India during the first half of the present century, seems to be only the forerunner of similar changes, which are to affect the rest of Eastern Asia during its remaining period. To all appearance, the sun of Eastern independence is rapidly setting, and the worn-out and effete dynasties of Asia, from the banks of the Irawaddy to the China seas, are hastening to extinction. It would be an act of foolish timidity to shut our eyes to the steady and irresistible progress of circumstances, and the rapidly advancing influence of the Anglo-Saxon, not in India alone, but throughout the eastern hemisphere. Whatever be the origin of the Burmese war, just or unjust, it is difficult to suppose that, with all Lord Dalhousie's reluctance, we can stop at Pegu; that is to say, if that which has happened before is that which will happen hereafter. I wish to avoid inflicting any alarm on Mr. Cobden, but he must make up his mind for the absorption, sooner or later, of the whole of the kingdom of Burmah. The present Governor-General, or, if he should not remain long enough, his successor, will be constrained to extinguish the dynasty of Alompra, and make the British terri-

tories conterminous with those of China for 200 miles. Meanwhile, new agencies are appearing on the scene ; the " thirteen revolted provinces " of Lord North's time have become a great country, with all the living energy of the parent, and none of her political encumbrances, and are exhibiting a power of development of which there has been no example in the history of man. The transatlantic Anglo-Saxon has now stretched across the continent of America from sea to sea, and is establishing settlements of gigantic size on the Pacific, in the provinces of Oregon and California, and new prospects and projects are rising in connection with these new states. A railway is projected for uniting San Francisco with New York ; and the Americans, who have now reached the shores of the Pacific with their commercial activity and ambition, are looking across that ocean for new fields of enterprise in Asia. In a report recently made by the Naval Committee of the House of Representatives, it is stated that " the vast commerce of which the mighty and majestic Pacific will be the theatre is now within our grasp ; the means by which to become the first maritime, commercial, and political power in the world, are stretched before us. Should we pause in the effort to secure this supremacy ? Should any temporizing, timid spirit, be permitted to check this stride of progress ? The teeming millions of the eastern slope of Asia, without a single obstacle to intervene, are spread out, almost face to face with the extensive possessions of the western slope of this continent." The result of the labours of this

Committee is to recommend the acceptance of the offer made by a Company, the object of which is "to cause the balance of trade with all nations to turn in favour of America, and make New York what London now is, the settling house of the world." These are great and ambitious projects, but the Americans have shown us that there is no enterprise which they abandon because it appears at first to be too large for their grasp. That which is the vision of fancy to-day, in ten years becomes matter of history. The first of the magnificent line of steamers of nearly 3,000 tons, with which it is intended to bridge the Pacific, has made her trial trip to England with perfect success; and when this line of packets is completed, the eastern slope of Asia will be brought within less than twenty days' distance of the western slope of America; and when the rail across that continent is open, the port of Shanghai in China will be as near to New York as London was twenty years ago. We have thus a power of vast energy and expansiveness, brought to bear on the destinies of the Asiatic monarchies, which stretch from Singapore to the sea of Okhotsk. Meanwhile, the empire of China is rapidly breaking up, and 350,000,000 of men are open to new influences, and will require new masters. Just at this juncture a powerful armament belonging to the United States has made its appearance in the China seas, and the officer at the head of it has been entreated to give his support to the tottering throne of the Tartars. Time will show whether the rumours regarding the nature of these negotiations be

correct or not, but the inevitable result of any such intervention requires no comment. At the same time, an American mission has been sent to break up the exclusiveness of Japan, and demand the opening of its ports to the commerce of the world ; and this pacific message is wisely backed by a naval force, with more than a hundred pieces of cannon. Information has recently been received, that, contrary to all expectation, it has met with a friendly reception ; but, with all the caution and moderation the American functionaries may exert, they will find it difficult to escape the result which so constantly follows the contact of a highly-civilized and vigorous power with one that is less civilized and feebler. Whenever America may be brought into collision with the jealousies, the prejudices, and the arrogance of Orientals, the issue will no longer be under her control. Then, again, a new Anglo-Saxon empire is rising as if by the wand of a magician, in the more immediate neighbourhood of these Asiatic kingdoms ; and in the course of thirty or forty years there will, in all probability, be a British population of 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 in Australasia, with a steam flotilla of some hundreds of vessels. The various countries of eastern Asia will thus be pressed on all sides by external and irresistible influences ; and who will venture to assert, that any of the old dynasties of Japan or China, Cochin-China, or Siam, will long be able, under such circumstances, to maintain their national independence ? Nothing can be farther from my wish than to justify an aggressive policy on the ground of "destiny," but

when we are required to look to the approach of a period when the natives of India will throw off the dominion of England, we are at full liberty to meet the remark by showing that such a contingency becomes every day more remote and improbable. The increasing weakness and disorganization of all Oriental states, and the rapid growth of European strength, resources, and proximity, clearly indicate the tendency of events to one result,—the ultimate extinction of all Asiatic independence, and the establishment of Anglo-Saxon authority throughout the regions of Eastern Asia.

Mr. Cobden asserts that deeds of violence and injustice have marked every step of our progress in India, and he expresses a hope that the national conscience will be roused ere it be too late from its lethargy, and put an end to them. Seventy years ago, the same charges were brought against the Government of India, in language infinitely more impressive, by the first orator of the day; the great delinquent was arraigned for high crimes and misdemeanors in Westminster Hall; the most splendid talent in the nation was arrayed against him with such efficacy, that even he himself was confounded by the torrent of eloquence, and involuntarily exclaimed that for half an hour he really considered himself the greatest villain under the sun. But he received an honourable acquittal, and the reflections cast upon him and the Government of India are, with one or two exceptions, regarded in the present day only as serving to illustrate the virulence of party animosity. The same spirit of

hostility to the East-India Company and its administration has been again manifested, and the denunciations which are now launched against the Court, are doubtless destined to the same fate as those of which they are the mere repetition. Deeds of violence and injustice have not marked every step of our progress in India. No one has ever attempted to extenuate the transactions which occurred between the departure of Clive in 1759, and his return to Calcutta in 1765: they were a disgrace to our national character; and the conduct of the Company's servants, who found themselves suddenly raised from the condition of merchants and factors to that of princes, and invested with irresponsible authority over twenty-five millions of people, in a country abounding in wealth, is deserving of all the indignation which Mr. Macaulay has poured on it. But the opprobrious language which Mr. Cobden has thought fit to adopt cannot be applied, with the smallest regard to truth, to the proceedings in which such men as Lord Cornwallis or Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings or Lord William Bentinck, Lord Hardinge or Lord Dalhousie, have been the chief actors. No empire of such magnitude, either in ancient or modern times, has ever been erected with so little violence or injustice. When the East-India Company ceases to present the most popular object of political invective, when its acts have been transferred from the domain of politics to that of history, and are viewed with those calm and impartial feelings with which we contemplate the progress of the

Roman empire, there can be no doubt that the establishment of the British dominion in the East will be considered as a stupendous monument of national valour, wisdom, and genius. In less than a century, a handful of men, whose number, including soldiers, has never exceeded 50,000, have succeeded in establishing a magnificent empire over 150,000,000 of people, by a machinery originally devised for a commercial enterprise. It is the same seal which once attested invoices of Madras piece goods and Dacca muslins which has been affixed to treaties by which kingdoms as large as England have been disposed of. Throne after throne has been subverted, and the people of twenty languages and a hundred and twenty provinces have been taught to regard the Company of merchants trading to the East Indies, as the incarnation of sovereign power. With the exception of one or two reverses, the career of victory has never been interrupted, and no province once annexed to our dominions has ever been lost. The empire thus won by valour has been consolidated by the exercise of great political wisdom and high and noble principles, and it has been the constant aim of the British legislature and the Indian authorities at home, from 1772 to 1853, from the days of Lord North to those of Sir Charles Wood, to bestow on the inhabitants of India the best institutions which could be devised, and they were susceptible of. If, in the subjugation of kingdoms, princes have been inevitably reduced to the condition of stipendaries, we have at least endeavoured to raise their subjects from the condition

of serfs to the dignity and happiness of men. We are the only conquerors who have ever continued, from generation to generation, to bestow upon the families of prostrate and dethroned monarchs allowances to the extent of a million and a half sterling a year. The Government of the East-India Company has introduced peace and order where it found anarchy and oppression, and it has bestowed on the people subject to its sway those blessings of security and ease which they never enjoyed before. It may be little praise to say that India has been better governed by British functionaries than it was by their Mahomedan predecessors, but it is no small honour to the Court of Directors that the Government of India, under their management, has exhibited so happy a contrast to that of the colonies administered by Ministers of the Crown under the vigilant eye of Parliament. In a recent publication of the India Reform Society, the extreme cases of misgovernment on our part, and the rare instances of good government under the native princes, have been placed in juxtaposition, with the view of discrediting the East-India Company; but the reputation of a Government is to be determined by the general character and the fundamental principles of its administration, and not by certain extreme cases invidiously selected by its enemies. That there are many defects to be corrected, and many deficiencies to be supplied, in order to bring the Indian administration up to the level of public expectation in an age of unexampled progress, will be most readily admitted; and it is no small privilege for India to have this

high pressure of improvement constantly applied to it. Still, however numerous may be the flaws which we detect in the edifice when it is examined more closely, the empire we have raised in India is a noble and august spectacle, which foreigners regard with admiration, and which we may justly contemplate with feelings of national exultation.

The most prominent characteristic of the British empire in India and of its administration is its English features. Everything in it and about it is English. The family likeness of the offspring to the parent is so minute and strong as to appear "ridiculous." It is English in the rapidity and magnitude of its growth; English in the robust virtues by which it has been consolidated; and English also in all its imperfections and anomalies. The rapid rise and expansion of British interests in India correspond most faithfully, both in point of time and character, with the increase of domestic interests at home. It is during the period, dating from the close of the American war, in which our ships, commerce, and colonies, our manufactures and our industries have expanded beyond all precedent or expectation, that our dominion in the East has been stretched from the narrow limits of Bengal to its present imperial size. The one is not a greater phenomenon than the other, and they are both equally English in their nature. In like manner, the wisdom and the vigour which have given a character of stability to the Government of British India, are but the counterpart of the national virtues by which our institutions in England have been improved and

strengthened. But it is chiefly in regard to the defects and blemishes of the Indian administration, that its English character is so particularly visible. A brief reference to the salient points of similitude may be instructive, possibly amusing, to those who had been led to the conclusion, that everything in India is different from everything at home; that the one is all perfection, and the other all deformity.—It is objected to the Government of India that its revenues have been absorbed, and a debt incurred to the extent of £50,000,000 sterling, in wars; but what is this but an imitation of the example of England, the revenues of which have been exhausted, and a debt of £800,000,000 contracted, in the prosecution of wars?—It is affirmed that the expenditure of the revenues of India, past, present, and prospective, in military operations, has deprived its Government of the means of carrying on those national improvements which were so desirable; and, in his recent speech at the Peace Conference in Edinburgh, Mr. Bright made precisely the same affirmation regarding the Government of England.—The public authorities in India are charged with a neglect of their duty in having made so inadequate a provision for the education of the people, and appropriated only £80,000, out of a net revenue of about £23,000,000, to that object; yet, in England, Parliament has, even in the present year, voted only £260,000 out of a revenue of £52,000,000.—

Then, it is affirmed that in India the Government has allowed the indigenous schools, which existed in every village, to go to decay. Even if this charge

were as true as it is fabulous, it will be found to be only an imitation of the neglect which has been exhibited in the mother country, where property of the supposed annual value of £700,000 or £800,000 sterling, devoted by the piety of our ancestors to benevolent and educational purposes, has been diverted with perfect impunity from its legitimate object ; while the attempt to remedy this great evil, which was commenced thirty-seven years ago, has received the sanction of Parliament only in the present year.—It is a matter of accusation that there is no criminal Code in India, and that the Criminal Courts are guided by laws which are an incongruous compound of Mahomedan institutes, and English Acts, and local regulations ; neither is there as yet a criminal Code in England, though the means of completing it have been so much more abundant, and the criminal law of England is the patchwork of centuries.—It is affirmed that the civil law in India is a mass of technicality, abstruseness, and complication. But these defects arise almost entirely from the circumstance of its being so servile a copy of English law, once deemed the perfection of reason, but which the *Times* now stigmatizes in such language as this : “ The practice of our own Court of Chancery, the special pleading abominations of our Common Law Courts, and the cruelties in our own criminal procedure, until a comparatively recent epoch, should render us quick to sympathize with the wretched Indian, who groans under similar troubles.” —The decisions of some of the Company’s Judges in India have been held up to reprobation, and Mr.

Norton, an English barrister, has culled from a number of cases at the Madras Presidency, certain instances of inconsistency and injustice, with the view of exciting public indignation against the Courts. But are the decisions of the Courts at home so entirely free from all anomalies? Many can recollect the time when the *Examiner* was in the habit of denouncing, week after week, the judgments of the Criminal Courts in London, under the head of "Justices' Justice." A few days after the appearance of Mr. Norton's work various decisions in the courts in this country, characterized by the same inconsistencies which he has exhibited, were exposed to public contempt in the columns of the *Times*. Nor will it be forgotten that one of the most eminent and venerable of the Judges of England, on the perusal of Mr. Norton's collection, affirmed that he should find little difficulty in adducing from the records of English Courts, within the circle of a few years, quite as many instances of strange and indefensible decisions. Admitting that all the cases selected by him are deserving of the obloquy he heaps on them, are they more singular, and more revolting to our sense of justice, than the decisions of many an Election Committee, to whom Parliament has delegated its judicial functions, and who have, during the present session, unseated members for the crime of bribery, recording at the same time their perfect conviction that many of the men thus subjected to an ignominious penalty were not only ignorant that any bribery had been practised, but had used every effort in their power to prevent it?

I am not attempting to extenuate the decisions of the Madras Bench by this comparison ; my object is simply to show how much they correspond with decisions in this country. — The heavy costs of suits in India are generally complained of. Legal charges are doubtless very atrocious, but they are also very English. In this country County Courts have recently been established, to render the administration of justice not only simple and expeditious, but also cheap ; yet the average cost of suits in these Courts is found to be equal to one-fourth the sums decreed.—In India salt has been taxed to the extent of 300 per cent., but this appears after all to be only a humble imitation of the example of England, which at one period subjected its native salt to a tax of 600 per cent.—It is also matter of reproach that the manufacture of salt has been prohibited in the lower parts of Bengal ; but here also the Government of India cannot claim the merit of originality, for England had anticipated it by prohibiting the cultivation of tobacco.—Even the anomalous construction of the Government of India, to which so many objections have been raised, only serves to remind us the more vividly of the constitution of our native land. During the debates on the India Bill, Mr. Cobden declared his inability to discover where the Government of India was seated ; and a foreigner coming to this country, without any knowledge of the complicated machinery of our constitution, finds precisely the same difficulty regarding the Government of England. It has been affirmed with great truth that India, to be well governed, must

be governed in India, and of this we have the most decisive proof in the fact that the three most recent improvements of the Telegraph, the low and uniform Postage, and the extension of the Rail, originated in the proposals of the Governor-General. Yet he cannot take a single step which is not liable to be reversed from home, and there is always a degree of uncertainty as to the reception which his measures may experience. The government of the British possessions in India has been confided, by the wisdom of Parliament, to the East-India Company, yet the Company cannot despatch a single order to India without the sanction of the Board of Control, which, in its turn, is so fettered that it can originate nothing. We are thus surrounded on all sides by anomalies, but they are scarcely less numerous and striking than those which are exhibited in the construction of the English Government. Here, the executive authority of the State is in the hands of the Ministers selected by the Crown, but their measures may at any time be frustrated, and they themselves turned out of office, by an adverse vote of the House of Commons, which vote, again, may be overruled by the Upper House, and upon which the Crown may place its veto. The anomalies of the British constitution, when viewed in connection with the results of this anomalous system, are the greatest political enigma of this or any other age; and they have been, to a considerable degree, reflected in the constitution of the Government of India. In both cases we have check upon check to such a degree that a spectator might be dis-

posed to believe the game would soon be up, and the administration brought to a dead lock. Yet, amidst all these theoretical inconsistencies, the great objects of good government and national improvement are prosecuted with greater success than in Governments of which the principle is more simple. In France, in Austria, and in Russia there is a total absence of all such perplexing anomalies. The theory and the practice of those governments are the very quintessence of simplicity ; there is no difficulty in discovering where the government is ; it centres in the three Emperors. It seems to be of the essence of constitutional Governments that the magnetic pole of authority should be invisible, and we have communicated no small measure of this principle to the system devised for India.

But the most important and practical point of resemblance between the mother country and the dependency, has reference to the means of internal communication. It is objected to the public authorities in India that they have done nothing worthy of notice in this department of public duty, beyond the construction of the Great Trunk Road and the Ganges Canal. But in England, also, the road to Holyhead and the Caledonian Canal are, I believe, the only great public works which have been completed at the public expense. The numerous railroads which intersect this country in every direction have been constructed from private capital, and it is precisely to the same source we must look for the same advantages in India. Railroads are the first political, military, and commercial

necessity of India, and before the wants of that country can be said to be fully supplied, it will be necessary to expend between twenty and thirty millions sterling. It is of course beyond the means of the Indian Government to provide for this expenditure, out of a revenue, which, even in time of peace, is barely adequate to the demands on it. The rail must be constructed from the funds of the community, and chiefly from the overflowing capital of England. Owing to the peculiar circumstances of India, no such application of private resources to a great national undertaking can be expected, except under the guarantee of the public Authorities. Much the same necessity is felt in regard to the colonies of England, but it is particularly apparent in the matter of public undertakings in India. But if the wishes of the India Reform Society had been carried, and the Government of India, instead of being intrusted to the East-India Company, had been at once vested in the Crown, and its obligations, both of the past and of the future, had been identified with those of England, and subjected to the confirmation of Parliament, small indeed would have been the hope of Indian railways. The utmost repugnance would have been manifested to augment the pecuniary obligations of England to the extent required for an adequate system of railroads in India. The diffidence which the Colonial Secretary recently exhibited in proposing to Parliament to guarantee a loan for the relief of the finances of Jamaica, to the extent of only half a million sterling, clearly indicates the difficulty which would have been experienced in

obtaining a Parliamentary sanction for raising thirty times that amount for the benefit of India. By continuing the Government of India in the East-India Company, however, the most ample provision has been at once made for our railroads. On the arrival of Lord Dalhousie's Minute, the Chairman of the Company was enabled, by a stroke of his pen, to guarantee four and a half per cent. on loans to the extent of £12,000,000 sterling, to be applied with promptitude and vigour to the construction of the Rail at the three Presidencies. Mr. Bright, in a recent address at a public meeting, designated the Government of India as the *hocus-pocus* Government of the Board of Control and the East-India Company. But in reference to the all-important question of Railways, it was a most fortunate circumstance that Mr. Bright's advice in Parliament was not adopted, and that the Government of India was not transferred to the Crown; and it is to be hoped that this *hocus-pocus* Government will be continued, at least, until the great duties which it alone is able to accomplish have been completed, and India is covered with a network of Railways.

